the grandchildren,—and after the lapse of ages, the moss-grown characters add the most powerful charms to the majestic ruin. These means of giving interest to architecture are now neglected.

No church should be without a lofty steeple. The "heaven-directed spire" has a sacred dignity which should never be sacrificed except under the pressure of the most imperious necessity. There is considerable difficulty in combining a steeple with the orders of Grecian or Roman architecture. Wren mastered the difficulty, and produced combinations scarcely inferior to the Gothic. The Grecian or Roman steeple appears worst and ugliest when, as at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, it is seen riding athwart a Corinthian portico, to which it does not bear the slightest affinity; and best, when, according to a favourite practice of Palladio, it stands by the side of the edifice as a campanile or bell tower.

All things fairly considered, the Gothic style appears to be the most reasonable order for an English church. It is consecrated by its associations, and the most ordinary architect may easily learn to avoid any marked impropriety. It should be managed freely, and although we would not admit of any fantastic or capricious alterations of the style as existing in the great master-pieces with which this country abounds, still the architect should not be inhibited from such a discreet power of adaptation as the circumstances of the case may require. Such variations, however, will be very rarely needed, and then only in the disposition of the subordinate parts of the edifice. Q.

EGYPTIAN PYRAMIDS AND HINDOO TEMPLES COMPARED.

The most common form of the Hindoo pagodas is the pyramidal, of which one of the most remarkable is that of Chalembaram, on the Coromandel coast, about thirty-four geographical miles south of Pondicherry, and seven from the sea.

The whole temple, with its attached buildings, covers an area of 1,332 feet by 936 (according to others 1,230 feet by 960), and is surrounded with a brick wall* 30 feet high and 7 thick, round which there is another wall, furnished with bastions. The four entrances are under as many pyramids, which up to the top of the portal, 30 feet in height, are formed of free-stone, ornamented with sculptured figures. Above the portal, the pyramid is built of tiles or bricks, to the height of 150 feet, with a coat of cement upon it, which is covered with plates of copper and ornaments of baked clay. On passing through the chief portico of the western propylæa, we see on the left an enormous hall, with more than 1,000 pillars, which are above 36 feet high, and covered with slabs of stone; this hall might have served as a gallery for the priests to walk about in, like the hypostyle halls of the Egyptian temples. In the midst of these columns, and surrounded by them, is a temple called that of eternity. On the right or south side, we see the chief temple, with halls of several hundred pillars at the east and west end, also supporting a flat roof of stone. The pagoda itself rests on a basis 360 feet long and 260 broad, and rises to a surprising height. It is formed of blocks of stone 40 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 5 feet thick, which must have been brought about 200 miles, as there are no stone quarries in the neighbourhood. The temple has a peristyle round it, and thirty-six of the pillars, which are placed in six rows, and form the portico, support a roof of smooth blocks. The columns are 30 feet high, and resemble the old Ionic pillar. The whole pyramid surpasses in size St. Paul's Cathedral, in London. The roof of the pyramid has a copper casing covered with reliefs referring to mythical subjects; the gilding which was once on it is still visible. In the middle of the courtyard there is a tank surrounded with a gallery of pillars, and also an enclosure round it of marble, well polished and ornamented with sculptures and arabesques. In the eastern part there is still another court, surrounded with a wall, on the inside of which is a colonnade covered with large slabs of stone. Here also there is a pagoda, which is but little inferior in size to the larger one; but it contains only one large dark chamber covered with sculptures, which have reference to the worship of certain deities, particularly Vishnu.

The interior ornaments are in harmony with the whole; from the nave of one of the pyramids there hang, on the tops of four buttresses, festoons of chains, in length 548 feet, made of stone. Each garland, consisting of twenty links, is made of one piece of stone 60 feet long; the links themselves are monstrous rings, 32 inches in circumference, and polished as smooth as glass. One chain is broken, and hangs down from the pillar. In the neighbourhood of the pagodas there are usually tanks and basins lined with cement, or buildings attached for the purpose of lodging pilgrims who come from a distance. It is, however, often the case that the adjoining buildings, as well as the external ornaments in general, are in bad taste, and the work of a later age than the pagoda itself.

The pyramidal entrances of the Indian pagodas are analogous to the Egyptian propylæ, while the large pillared rooms which support a flat roof of stone, are found frequently in the temples of both countries. Among the numerous divisions of the excavations of Ellora, there is an upper story of the *Dasawatara*, or the temple of Vishnu's incarnations, the roof of which is supported by sixty-four square based pillars, eight in each row. This chamber is about 100 feet wide, and somewhat deeper, and as to general design may be compared with the excavated chambers of Egypt, which are supported by square columns. The massy materials, the dark chambers, and the walls covered with highly wrought sculptures; and the tanks near the temples, with their enclosure of stone and the steps for the pilgrims, are also equally characteristic of a pagoda and an Egyptian temple. To this we may add the high wall, of a rectangular form, carried all round the sacred spot; it is, however, principally the massive structure of these surrounding walls which forms the point of comparison, as Greek temples also had a wall enclosing the sacred ground, and the temples and churches of all countries are, as a general rule, separated from unhallowed ground, if not by strong walls, at least by some mark which determines the extent of the sacred precincts.

Yet there is a further resemblance worth noticing between some of these Hindoo pagodas and the great temple of Phtha at Memphis. The Egyptian temple had four chief entrances, or propylæ, turned to the four cardinal points of the compass; which is also the case with the pagoda of Chalembaram, with another at Siringam, and probably others also. The pagoda of Chalembaram, according to Indian tradition, is one of the oldest in the country, and this opinion is confirmed by the appearance of the principal temple contained within the walls; but other parts, such as the pyramidal entrances, the highly-finished sculptures, and the chain festoons, must be the work of a later date. It seems probable, then, that this enormous religious edifice was the growth of many ages, each adding something to enlarge and perfect the work of former days.—*Library of Entertaining Knowledge.*

* The outer wall is brick cased with stone; the inner is all of stone. The four sides are turned respectively to the four cardinal points.—Heber, India, p. 76.

FONT IN PRIORY CHURCH, BRECON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

Sir,—If you think the above sketch worth inserting in your valuable periodical, as a rare specimen of antiquity, you are perfectly welcome. It belongs to the Priory Church, Brecon, and there is little doubt but that it was executed at the time the church was built, which is generally supposed to be in the tenth or eleventh century; and at the present day, although greatly curtailed from its original state, considered one of the finest Gothic structures in South Wales. The font is the largest I ever saw, the diameter of the orifice being 2 feet 10 inches, and the height of the whole 2 feet 8 inches.

The ornaments are very rudely carved, but by the seeming union of three in the different parts, are evidently emblematic of the Trinity.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. L. T.

Berkeley-place, Brecon, Nov. 9, 1843.

To learn about OCR and PDF Compression visit ThePaperlessOffice.org